

Garbage Gazette

Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection

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College Recycling Conference

Yale University will be hosting the next conference in the National Recycling Coalition's "Campus Recycling Series." The one-day conference will take place on the Yale campus in New Haven on March 13th, 2001. The conference is designed to help faculty, staff and students in the northeastern states develop their recycling efforts, whether from the ground up or to improve existing programs. Registration information will

be forthcoming. If you are interested in presenting at the conference or are a vendor or service provider interested in serving as a sponsor, contact C.J. May at (203) 432-6852 or cyril.may@yale.edu.



Mercury Fever Thermometer Exchanges Successful.....But

Connecticut residents exchanged thousands of their mercury fever thermometers this Fall for digital replacements. The program exceeded all expectations but there were some lessons learned for improving the program for future exchanges.

Over 32,000 thermometers were dropped off at 65 collection events from September through November. This averages to nearly 500 thermometers per collection. More than 40 pounds of mercury were removed from resident's homes and diverted from the solid waste stream. The DEP intends to continue the program in the Spring of 2001.

The Regional Water Authority (RWA) in New Haven set the gold standard for the exchanges. In addition to conducting exchanges at the household hazardous waste collections, the RWA sponsored 3 additional weekday exchanges and provided extensive promotion. WTNH and WBNE both covered the exchanges on their evening news. The New Haven Register ran a front-page reader poll asking if mercury fever thermometers should be banned in mid-October. The result – over 5,000 thermometers were turned in at the next exchange! This was three times more than the next highest amount and ten times the state average! Congratulations to Lori Vitagliano and Joan Huwiler of the RWA for their hard work.

Program administrators and hazardous waste vendors also indicated that the exchanges had the added benefit of creating greater participation in the household hazardous waste collections. At least one vendor noted an increase in the amount of mercury products and elemental mercury coming from residents. Over 500 pounds of elemental mercury was turned in to Fall household hazardous waste collections from state residents with not all programs reporting.

There were some lessons learned from these initial exchanges. The promotion of the program did not reach all parts of the state equally. Most of Fairfield County had low participation, due largely to a lack of awareness about the exchange from program administrators and little time to promote the program. Other parts of the state were also not effectively reached. The challenge for DEP and local HHW administrators is to provide enough exchange opportunities and to promote them in such a way as to generate the highest possible participation. It will also be important for local and regional

collection coordinators to keep accurate records of thermometer collections and exchanges as the number of exchange events increases.

SoundWaters Environmental Learning Laboratory Demonstrates Use of Recycled Materials



SoundWaters, Inc. an environmental education organization in Stamford, has recently created a new environmental learning laboratory in the renovated historic Holly-Sanford House located at Cove Island Park. The renovated house is now called the Community Center for Environmental Education, and houses the learning laboratory, an environmental education library, and an environmental business room. SoundWaters designed the laboratory as a demonstration project to show how recycled materials can be used. For example, the countertops and cabinets are made of recycled plastic milk jugs and the tiles in the bathroom are made of recycled glass. A grant from DEP's Long Island Sound Fund was used to purchase laboratory equipment such as microscopes and collection bottles, and resource materials such as field guides for the laboratory, as well as nets and field equipment for collection of specimens. A second Long Island Sound Fund grant was awarded to SoundWaters to provide family-oriented environmental education programs at the Center and in the field.



SoundWaters has carried the idea of pollution prevention throughout the entire Center. They have used low VOC paints to decorate the interior, and have installed a geothermal heating and cooling system to minimize the use of fossil fuels and electricity. The environmental business room is a forum for businesses and other organizations to showcase their recycled products, packaging or pollution prevention methods. Many of these businesses have been the recipients of DEP's Green Circle Award.

The new center celebrated its grand opening on September 23, 2000, with representatives from DEP, SoundWaters, several corporate partners, and City of Stamford officials. For more information about public educational programs which are offered at the new center, contact Tom Day, Co-Director of the Center at (203) 406-3303. For school programs, contact Emily Dupignac at (203) 406-3307.

For more information about the Long Island Sound Fund or a complete list of funded projects, please contact the Long Island Sound Fund Coordinator, Kate Hughes, at (860) 424-3034, or visit our website at <http://dep.state.ct.us/olisp/licplate/licplate.htm>. For information on ordering a Long Island Sound plate, call 1-800-CT-SOUND.

Watch the January, 2001 Gazette for the list of winners of prizes in the state and national drawings for America Recycles Day prizes!

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